ENGL 335: Creative Writing 1  
Spring 2017  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30-3:50, Hagey Hall room 138

Course Outline

Instructor: Carrie Snyder  
Contact: ca2snyde@uwaterloo.ca  
Office hours: 1:30-2:20 Tuesdays & Thursdays, HH 369, or by appointment  
Weekly updates and reminders will be posted on LEARN.

Course description: Aimed at encouraging students to develop their creative and collaborative potentials, the course consists of in-class exercises and workshops, seminar discussions, and lots of opportunities to write, with units on poetry, short fiction, and creative non-fiction. Students will also submit work to a Canadian literary magazine.

Required materials: Courseware and A Poetry Handbook, by Mary Oliver. Composition notebook and black pen for in-class exercises. In-class exercises will be written by hand.

Attendance and participation: Attendance formula: No penalty for missing class for barfing/fever!, but EMAIL ME before class. All other excuses: You miss 1-2 classes, this is ok; You miss 3 classes, grade drops by ½ letter. You miss 4 classes, grade drops full letter & drops full letter with each additional absence until fail-out. Three x late = 1 absence. No cellphone or laptop use in class. Weekly out-of-class notebook work will also be assessed for participation. Please discuss extensions in advance of the deadline; late assignments receive penalties of a full letter grade for each day late. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email or visit during office hours.

Mark breakdown: Participation, 25%. Includes in-class participation & notebook work (20%), and the literary magazine assignment & cover letter (5%).  
Portfolio work, 75%. Includes peer reviews. Poetry portfolio: Five poems + reflection (15%) + poetry peer reviews (7.5%) = 22.5%. Story portfolio # 1: One story + reflection (15%) + book report (7.5%) + story peer reviews (7.5%) = 30%. Story portfolio # 2: One polished in-class exercise + reflection (15%) + story peer reviews (7.5%) = 22.5%.

Grading: Your final grade will be based on Attendance & Punctuality, Classroom Participation & Notebook Work, Timely Completion of Assignments, and your Final Portfolios. All formally graded assignments will be assessed on the following criteria: Grammar and syntax: 25%; Style and voice: 25%; Structure and organization: 25%; Creativity, depth: 25%. To get an A to A+ you must spend more time on assignments, demonstrate active engagement with the work, and exceed expectation (this may include: making radical revisions to your own work; discovering something original; challenging yourself to leave your comfort zone; experimenting with a style different from your own). Those who spend more time on assignments and demonstrate engagement with the work will get a B- to A-. Those who do the minimum work required will get a C.
Course curriculum

Week 1, May 2 & 4: Welcome
What is creative writing? Why do you write? Discussion of course structure.

Tuesday, May 2

Thursday, May 4
Today’s reading: Lynda Barry excerpts from “What It Is,” in Courseware

Week 2, May 9 & 11: Good poems/bad poems
Why read poems? Why write poems?

Tuesday, May 9
Today’s reading: Mary Oliver’s A Poetry Handbook, pp 1-34
In-class exercises: Writing poems, talking about why we read & write poems.

Thursday, May 11
Today’s reading: Mary Oliver’s A Poetry Handbook, pp 58-108
In-class exercises: Exploring the formal elements of a poem.

Week 3, May 16 & 18: Line breaks and listening
Workshopping: line breaks & workshopping the workshop

Tuesday, May 16
Today’s reading: Mary Oliver’s A Poetry Handbook on the line, pp 35-57
In-class exercises: Line break workshop—important: bring to class one original poem, written by you, in order to participate in workshop.

Thursday, May 18
In-class exercises: Workshopping the workshop—important: bring Courseware to class.

**Due on Friday, May 19: poems for portfolio submitted to workshop group on LEARN, midnight deadline.**
Week 4, May 23 & 25: Poetry peer reviews
Ideas about working together as a group, and creating rather than destroying.

Tuesday, May 23
No class today.

Thursday, May 25
In-class exercises: Poetry workshop: come to class prepared to discuss your peers’ work. Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.

**Due: Submit poetry peer reviews to workshop group on LEARN before class-time (7.5%)**

Week 5, May 30 & June 1: Fiction unit, getting started
What is a short story? What can a short story do? What can’t it do? Control over POV.

Tuesday, May 30
In-class exercises: Writing about home & cartoon character build
Meet new workshop groups.

Thursday, June 1
Today’s reading (which must be read before class!): “Kindness,” by Kerry-Lee Powell, “Traplines” by Eden Robinson, “Everything Under Your Feet” by Elisabeth De Mariafﬁ, “Clear Skies” by Lynn Coady, and “My Mother’s Idea of Sexy” by Mona Awad
In-class exercises: Bring Courseware to class for workshop.

**Due on Friday, June 2: Poetry portfolio + reflection (15%), submitted on LEARN by midnight.**

Week 6, June 6 & 8: Writing “in the manner of …” & the stages of editing
Book reports & the stages of editing.

Tuesday, June 6
In-class exercises: Meet in new workshop groups to discuss short story collections & writing “in the manner of …”

**Due: Book report on short story collection, hand in hard copy at the end of class (7.5%)**

Thursday, June 8
Guest speaker: Tasneem Jamal on the stages of editing
In-class exercises: Editing exercises.
**Week 7, June 13 & 15: Liminal places, transitions**

*Chronology vs sequence. Storyboarding. Endings.*

Tuesday, June 13
In-class exercises: Windows & doors: non-chronological storytelling and anchoring images. Writing editorial letters.

Thursday, June 15
In-class exercises: Storyboarding sequences. Endings.

**Due on Friday, June 16: Draft of story # 1 (written “in the manner of …”), submitted to your workshop group on LEARN by midnight.**

**Week 8, June 20 & 22: The details**

*Finding the plot through the details. Writing as an insider or an outsider. Short story workshop.*

Tuesday, June 20
Today’s reading: “Dance of the Happy Shades” by Alice Munro and “When We Were Nearly Young” by Mavis Gallant
In-class exercises: Group discussion of the details in Munro and Gallant.

Thursday, June 22
In-class exercises: Short story workshop: come to class prepared to discuss your peers’ work. Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.

**Due: Submit short story peer reviews to your workshop group on LEARN before class-time (7.5%)**

**Week 9, June 27 & 29: Playing**

*Fairy tales & archetypes. Altering a reader’s sense of time.*

Tuesday, June 27
In-class exercises: Fairy tales & archetypes.
Meet new workshop groups.

Thursday, June 29
In-class exercises: Picture exercise. Altering the reader’s sense of time by zooming in or sweeping out.
Week 10, July 4 & 6: Dialogue
*Listening and recreating.*

Tuesday, July 4
Today’s reading: “Trap Lines” by Thomas King and “Repeat After Me” by David Sedaris
In-class exercises: Miniature 3-act plays. Discussion of dialogue in assigned readings.

Thursday, July 6
In-class exercises: Expanding a draft. Active voice.

**Due on Friday, July 7, by midnight: Draft of story # 2, developed from in-class exercise, submitted to workshop group on LEARN.

Week 11, July 11 & 13: Creative non-fiction, in brief
*Listening to each other’s stories. What’s true/what’s real? Who do our stories belong to?*

Tuesday, July 11
In-class exercises: Partner storytelling.
Important: Bring to class a story about yourself that you’re willing to share.

Thursday, July 13
Today’s reading: “The Carver Chronicles” by D.T. Max
In-class exercises: Discussion of the “The Carver Chronicles.” Short story workshop # 2.
Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.
**Due: Submit story peer reviews to your group on LEARN before class-time (7.5%)**

Week 12, July 18 & 20: Sharing our work
*Canadian literary magazines. Writing a cover letter & submitting your work.*

Tuesday, July 18
Guest speaker! Pamela Mulloy, editor of *The New Quarterly.*
In-class-exercises: Literary magazine presentations. Group work on writing a cover letter.
**Due: Literary magazine assignment, thumbnail sketches (2.5%).**

Thursday, July 20
Today’s reading: “Rana in Rien,” by Jana O. Al Khatib
In-class exercise: Editing free-for-all.

Last class, Tuesday, July 25: Poetry slam
In class exercises: Poetry slam!
**Due: Bring cover letter and story submission for *The New Quarterly* (2.5%); also submit on LEARN before class-time.
**Story # 1 (15%) and Story # 2 (15%) due on Thursday, July 27, at midnight.**
**On notebook work:** Each week you will be assigned out-of-class writing work on a topic related to what we’re discussing in class. Bring your notebook to class; work may be used in class. You are encouraged to use your notebook to develop your own writing practice: collect ideas, observations, overheard dialogue, character studies, descriptive passages. Notebook work contributes to your participation mark, and notebooks will be collected and checked periodically.

**Short story collections for book review**

What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours, by Helen Oyeyemi (2016)
The Kindness of Enemies, by Leila Aboulela (2016)
These Were Their Faces, by Silvina Ocampo (2015)
Tenth of December, by George Saunders (2013)
Islands of Decolonial Love, by Leanne Simpson (2013)
We Need New Names, by NuViolet Bulawayo (2013)
Suddenly, a Knock on the Door, by Etger Keret (2012)
What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank, by Nathan Englander (2012)
This Is How You Lose Her, by Junot Diaz (2012)
Siege 13, by Tamas Dobozy (2012)
Memory Wall, by Anthony Doerr (2010)
A Visit from the Goon Squad, by Jennifer Egan (2010)
In Other Rooms, Other Wonders, by Daniyal Mueenuddin (2009)
Monstress, by Lysley Tenorio (2008)
Varieties of Disturbance, by Lydia Davis (2007)
No One Belongs Here More Than You, by Miranda July (2005)
Interpreter of Maladies, by Jhumpa Lahiri (1999)
Birds of America, by Lorrie Moore (1998)
The Elephant Vanishes, by Haruki Murakami (1993)
The Middleman and Other Stories, by Bharati Mukherjee (1988)
At the Bottom of the River, by Jamaica Kincaid (1983)
Home Truths, by Mavis Gallant (1981) ... *or other Gallant collection*
Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?, by Raymond Carver (1976)
Dance of the Happy Shades, by Alice Munro (1968) ... *or other Munro collection*
Little Disturbances of Man, by Grace Paley (1959)
A Good Man is Hard to Find, by Flannery O’Connor (1955)
Collected Stories, by Anton Chekhov (originally published between 1883-1903)

**Mental Health Services**

Students suffering from anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsessions or compulsions, relationship difficulties, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within 2 days of initial contact. All contacts are completely confidential. Contact Health Services: 519-888-4096 to schedule appointment. For free 24/7 help: 1-866-797-0000. Contact Counselling Services: 519-888-4567 x 32655 to schedule appointment, or counserv@uwaterloo.ca
Territorial Acknowledgement
We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.